

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information apparatus, comprising:

a determination unit which determines a presence/
absence of a received mail message via a network; and

5 a control unit which acquires and stores, when
the determination unit determines the presence of the
received mail message, the received mail message in
a storage medium, and outputs video data which contains
image information to notify of a fact of mail reception
10 from a video output terminal to a television receiver.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
the control unit transmits information indicating the
fact of mail reception to a computer corresponding to
a destination user of the received mail message via
15 a network.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, further
comprising a display unit which displays information,
the control unit being capable of displaying
information indicating the fact of mail reception on
20 the display unit.

4. The apparatus according to claim 1, further
comprising a television tuner which receives and
processes broadcast program data,
the control unit being capable of outputting, to
25 the television receiver, video data generated by
superimposing the image information at a predetermined
position on an image of the broadcast program data.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image information contains a message or icon.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a browse processing unit which executes
5 a user authentication process in response to an input operation corresponding to a browse request of the received mail message, reads out information of the received mail message for a corresponding user from the storage medium in accordance with an authentication
10 result, and outputs video data containing the read-out information to the television receiver.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a browse processing unit which executes
15 a user authentication process in response to a browse request of the received mail message sent from a computer via a network, reads out information of the received mail message for a corresponding user from the storage medium in accordance with an authentication result, and transmits the read-out information to the
20 computer.

8. A mail control method applied to an information apparatus having a video output terminal, the method comprising:

determining a presence/absence of a received mail
25 message via a network; and

acquiring and storing, when the presence of the received mail message is determined in the

determination, the received mail message in a storage medium and outputting video data containing image information to notify of a fact of mail reception from the video output terminal to a television receiver.

5 9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

transmitting, when the presence of the received mail message is determined in the determination, information indicating the fact of mail reception to
10 a computer corresponding to a destination user of the received mail message via a network.

10. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

displaying, when the presence of the received mail
15 message is determined in the determination, information indicating the fact of mail reception on a display unit equipped on the information apparatus.

11. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

20 receiving and processing broadcast program data by a television tuner; and

outputting, to the television receiver, video data generated by superimposing the image information at a predetermined position on an image of the broadcast
25 program data.

12. The method according to claim 8, wherein the image information contains a message or icon.

13. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

5 executing a user authentication process in
response to an input operation corresponding to
a browse request of the received mail message; and
10 reading out information of the received mail
message for a corresponding user from the storage
medium in accordance with an authentication result,
and outputting video data containing the read-out
10 information to the television receiver.

14. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

15 executing a user authentication process in
response to a browse request of the received mail
message sent from a computer via a network; and
15 reading out information of the received mail
message for a corresponding user from the storage
medium in accordance with an authentication result, and
transmitting the read-out information to the computer.